Reading Response 3

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The thing that interested me the most in this chapter of “My Freshman Year” was the fact that our words seem well-meaning, but are essentially empty. The international students would start conversations with American students and come away from the conversation thinking they had made a friend, when in reality the American students were just being polite. This sort of thing really interests me, as I’m very interested in other people’s cultures. A lot of my friends were from other countries in high school. But I never was able to evaluate my own American culture because it seemed so common and correct. Not asking someone how they’re doing in a conversation just seems rude. But to someone else from another culture, it could mean that you want to be friends with them. I just found it very interesting and relevant to my own life.

In “The Mind at Work”, the part that still blows my mind about waitressing is the fact that it is looked down on as a job. In society we think of jobs that require a lot of expertise are like doctors and lawyers and jobs that need a lot of training at universities to obtain. But waitressing requires just as much training, but you have to figure out the training on your own, which is that much harder. In college they help you figure out how to learn your trade, but in a service work job, you have to figure out the tricks of the trade all on your own. As I was reading through the chapter and learning about how much it takes to be good at the job and what it is like to be in a restaurant environment as an employee, I realized that I would not be able to do it initially. I would learn over time how to manage time and deal with unexpected tasks, but it would be all on me. This seems a little too treacherous for a “least skilled lower class occupation”.